

To: CODEL

From: Staff

Subj: Meeting at Defense Ministry with Senior Soviet Military Officers,  
September 2, 1985

CODEL met with senior military officers from the Ministry of Defense to discuss arms control and defense policy issues of interest to both sides. Entire CODEL was present. Representing the Soviet Union were Adm. N.N. Amel'ko, Assistant Chief of the Headquarters of the Soviet armed forces, and Col. Gen. N.F. Chervov, Chief of Directorate of the Headquarters and the U.S.S.R.'s most public military spokesman on arms control matters. The session lasted almost three hours, with half of it comprised of simultaneous translation.

Observers noted that the military officers were operating within a well-defined and restrictive set of guidelines as to positions to be conveyed to the CODEL. It also was theorized that Admiral Amel'ko and General Chervov played the roles of "good-guy/bad guy," respectively, during the discussion.

Admiral Amel'ko made brief welcoming comments and invited Senators to begin with either comments or questions.

On behalf of the delegation, Senator Byrd presented an opening statement which made the following major points:

- 1) All Americans, including the President and U.S. Senate, share the same objective--to live at peace with all nations. The U.S. recognizes that the U.S.S.R. is a great nation with legitimate security interests. We maintain our armed forces to defend ourselves and our allies, not to attack the U.S.S.R. nor to employ them to obtain unilateral military or political advantage over the Soviets.
- 2) The Senate, the President and the American people all agree that mutual, verifiable and equitable arms control agreements between

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the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. should be pursued vigorously.

3) Under the U.S. system, the Senate is an independent body which will reach its own conclusions about the desirability of giving its consent to ratification of any arms control treaties between the two countries. If a treaty is mutual, verifiable and equitable, if the Senate and American people think it can be adequately verified and think it is one with which the Soviets will comply, then ratification probabilities are high.

4) The U.S. agrees with the principle of "reciprocity" in its dealing with the U.S.S.R., a principle raised in General Secretary Gorbachev's April 8, 1985, PRAVDA interview.

5) U.S. positions insisting on meaningful verification and compliance with arms control treaties are not artificial obstacles to reaching agreements. They reflect the genuine, strongly-held concerns of the American people and the government they elect. Future treaties not adequately addressing these concerns will not be supported by the Senate and the American people, and agreeing to such treaties is more difficult with the current doubts about compliance.

6) U.S. positions regarding the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT), the Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Treaty (PNE), SALT and ABM compliance, and the latest Soviet testing moratorium offer are prompted by these dual concerns. They must be addressed, and the Soviet Union should reconsider U.S. requests to discuss new verification provisions for TTBT and PNE and the President's offer to invite its observers to a U.S. nuclear test.

7) Reciprocity is the foundation for the U.S.'s rejection of Soviet demands to abandon SDI research, since the Soviets have an SDI program. The American people, the Congress and the President do not want SDI

for the purposes of developing a nuclear first-strike capability against the U.S.S.R. We also do not think there should be a precondition, before the summit or the resuming of the Geneva talks, that requires the U.S. to abandon research on defenses which might reduce chances for a nuclear war. (Senator Byrd later elaborated that he was referring to SDI activities which only consisted of research within the limits of the ABM Treaty.)

8) It is time now to move away from public proposals at Geneva and to begin hard-bargaining over specific proposals. The Soviets should present such specific proposals.

Admiral Amel'ko responded, and after polite comments, stated that the Soviet Union had made specific proposals during the first two rounds of the Geneva talks, in keeping with the Shultz-Gromyko understanding, and that the U.S. only showed a "non-constructive" approach which contradicted this understanding.

The key issue at Geneva is space arms, the Admiral said, and the U.S.S.R. proposed a ban on their creation--including research, testing and actual deployment. One of the aims of the January understanding was to prevent an arms race in space. The U.S. behaves as if space weapons are not up for discussion at Geneva, and we have concluded the U.S. has no position on these weapons at Geneva.

Instead of discussing prevention of a space arms race, the discussion was conducted on certain rules for this race--quantities and types of weapons and the timing of such a race. The U.S. aim is to build a base for deploying (developing further) "Star Wars," the Admiral said.

He claimed the Soviet Union proposed radical reductions in strategic systems (in numbers of aggregate nuclear warheads and

warhead carriers) and a ban on creating new systems. He said the Soviet INF proposal was to end its build-up of countermeasures to NATO INF deployment at the level of British and French strategic systems.

He repeated the Soviet offer of a moratorium on both space strike and nuclear weapons systems during the negotiations.

Rejecting U.S. contentions about Soviet superiority, the Admiral said the SDI program contradicts the task of negotiating reductions in nuclear arsenals.

He dismissed American verification concerns by stating that national technical means were sufficient to read license plates on automobiles. He also quoted an American physics professor's claim that national technical means (NTM) permit detection of nuclear explosions with yields as low as one kiloton.

The Admiral discussed the Nunn-Warner proposal for nuclear crisis risk reduction centers by implying such concerns were addressed in the agreement last year to upgrade the Hot Line. Also, he said the Nunn/Warner proposal had been rejected by the U.S. Administration. The Soviets were prepared to listen, he said, if the two Senators had a more detailed proposal.

Admiral Amel'ko then described how the Soviets defined research as it relates to what is permissible for the SDI program under the ABM Treaty. No one means a ban on "thinking," he said, but research can be defined as including various stages of production: thinking, drawings on a drawing board, making models, making elements of equipment, construction of prototypes, and testing at ranges.

To confirm this, the Admiral quoted a SDI budget estimate of

\$70 billion and said "We don't believe pure thinking can cost so much." (DoD's official estimate of SDI research costs in FY 85-90 is about \$35-\$37 billion, with significant research remaining before deployment.)

General Chervov then delivered an attack on U.S. claims that SDI is only for defensive purposes, as well as on the extent to which it only is research. He said the President said SDI's aim was "to destroy Soviet missiles," implying this was offensive. He said the program contained "a whole complex of weapons," all of which were in different stages of development, implying (some of) these stages were beyond research now. He referred to the Senate's decision in June, in the FY 86 DoD Authorization Act, to permit three tests of an ASAT against targets in space as an example of an SDI element beyond the research stage. Other weapons in the SDI program included ABM systems, lasers, electro-magnetic guns, etc.

Stating that Lt. Gen. Abrahamson, the SDI program manager, was telling our NATO allies that we could decide whether to initiate SDI systems by 1990, the General questioned whether this could be done only "from drawing paper," implying the program would have to progress far beyond research for this decision to be made.

He repeated past Soviet offers of "unilateral measures" on no "first use" of nuclear weapons, no space-based ASATs, and the nuclear testing moratorium.

He stated that both the SALT I and II treaties became possible "on condition of a ban on ABMs (in the ABM Treaty)." The ABM Treaty and SDI are fully incompatible, and if one accepts SDI, then the ABM Treaty is cancelled, he said.

Furthermore, he quoted Gorbachev in his Time interview as saying that if agreement is not reached to ban space weapons, "then the

Geneva talks lose every meaning."

Challenging General Chervov by saying that the word "research" never appeared in the ABM Treaty, Senator Byrd said that "research" and "development" are two different functions. He said "we can conduct research for years and not develop the object of the research." SDI research may lead to development, testing and deployment; it may not.

Senator Byrd questioned how the Soviets could explain that U.S. SDI research "is development," but that their own research into lasers, radio, frequency weapons and charged particle beams is not development. He pointed out the contradiction in the Soviet claim that when the U.S. conducts such research, it is for first strike purposes, but that when the Soviets do, it is not for such purposes.

General Chervov admitted the ABM Treaty did not contain the word "research" but claimed that research consumes 90% of the funds spent for development. He also said that the goal of the SDI research made it non-permissible under the ABM Treaty, since experts cannot establish a dividing line between research and the beginning of practical development.

Senator Warner, in explaining the Senate's vote on limited testing of ASAT's, claimed by Chervov to be part of SDI, said it was taken in response to the Soviet ASAT system. Chervov claimed the Soviet ASAT still was in R&D and that it was a first generation system. He claimed the U.S. ASAT is a second generation system. (The U.S. considers the Soviet ASAT to be an operational system; regardless of its testing record, it is recognized that it has some limited capabilities against certain U.S. satellites.) (Warner - Senate decided that SDI could not violate ASAT Treaty)

Senator Nunn pressed General Chervov to better define, precisely where he draws the dividing line between research and other activities. Chervov refused. Senator Nunn supported Senator Byrd's statement on the Soviet contradictory positions about the U.S.S.R.'s own SDI research and the U.S. program. He asked how the U.S. could respond to a Soviet position which was a "no-position:" that there was no way to draw a line between research and other activities.

Senator Nunn challenged the Soviets to table a proposal at Geneva defining a line between research and other activities, and then the U.S. could respond to that proposal. He further said that if the Soviets tabled a specific proposal for reductions in offensive forces at Geneva, then both sides could approach an understanding on defenses.

The only reason we are conducting research on defenses is to counter Soviet offensive forces. Fewer offensive missiles would lessen the need for defensive measures, Senator Nunn said.

He said that if the Soviets "really want to test the U.S.'s commitment to SDI, you should table a proposal defining what you mean by 'significant offensive cuts' and a proposal defining what you mean by 'development'-- where you draw the line on research in a logical way." Together such proposals would "go a long way to helping assess whether the U.S. needs an SDI," he said.

Senator Nunn stated further, and Senator Warner agreed, that "as long as your (Soviet) offensive forces grow, I support SDI; if you table significant cuts and define the (dividing) line on research in a logical way, I would have to reassess (that position)."

In supporting Senator Nunn's statement, Senator Warner said we have heard about proposals through third parties. "We want to hear concrete proposals...in Geneva."

General Chervov agreed that this is a matter for the negotiations at Geneva, and that the discussion with the CODEL only was an exchange of views. He said that the U.S.S.R. had stated its position clearly, both in the Gorbachev Time interview and at Geneva: if the U.S. accepts a complete ban on SDI, in one month the Soviet Union will table a proposal for substantial reductions in strategic offensive forces.

He defined the two sides positions as: You say you first require our figures (on offensive cuts) and then you'll talk about what to do with SDI. We say agree on SDI and then we'll give you our figures in one month. Responding to Senator Nunn again asking where can the line be drawn on research, Chervov said "there is no such line; the (only?) option is a ban (on SDI)."

Senator Byrd pointed out that, earlier in the discussion, the Soviets had said there were no preconditions for the Geneva talks, yet General Chervov just had stated a precondition in his outline of the timing of the Soviet proposal for offensive reductions.

Chervov alleged that his outline did not represent a precondition, but that it was the understanding between Shultz and Gromyko that the subject of the talks was to prevent an arms race in space, and that could not be done if the U.S. was developing space weapons.

Later, he again denied the Soviet position was a precondition; it was "the understanding of the order of talks in Geneva." (At that later point, Senator Mitchell stated "What you have said today is a precondition if I ever heard one.")

Senator Mitchell expressed surprise and concern about General Chervov's dismissal, as "an American invention," the U.S. claims that the U.S.S.R. has a SDI program. He indicated that information available to the CODEL contradicted the General's assertion.



Senator Mitchell continued that the Soviet position of not proposing specific offensive weapons reductions until after an SDI ban is agreed to has two meanings, either of which calls into question whether the Soviets are meeting their obligation in the Geneva understanding to negotiate in good faith in all three areas (START, INF, Space Weapons).

He said the Soviet position means either 1) they do not have a position or that they are not ready to present it; or 2) they have such a position and (only) will make it available when the SDI ban is accepted.

In response, Chervov said the Soviet position is well-defined and said it was Senator Mitchell's second conclusion.

Chervov did say that both sides must make concessions at the negotiations, but that the concessions the Soviets were prepared to make were in strategic weapons in exchange for the SDI ban.

Senator Mitchell's final conclusion was that the Soviet position of not proposing offensive cuts until after the SDI ban was accepted was not in full compliance with the Shultz-Gromyko understanding. "To have it (a specific proposal) and not present it unless your precondition is met is not what I consider to be negotiating in good faith as outlined in the January understanding," he said.

Chervov again said it was not possible to reduce strategic offensive weapons when, simultaneously, strategic defensive weapons are produced. He said "We understood that in 1969 (when the ABM and SALT I treaty negotiations began)."

The General also said that SDI's continuation would mean the "fall of the ABM Treaty, and the complete basis of our relations

would be undermined." If this happened, it would be the U.S.'s fault, he said; he urged the U.S. to protect the ABM Treaty.

Senator DeConcini stated that, after listening to the discussion, he was extremely concerned that unless the U.S. meets the Soviet threshold precondition of banning SDI in advance of discussing offensive reduction proposals, "the stage is set for a failure of the negotiations at the summit and at the Geneva talks."

President Reagan has said he is determined to try to find common ground between the positions of the two nations, Senator DeConcini said. He said he hoped the Soviet leader, Mr. Gorbachev, would indicate a similar position of flexibility, and that Gorbachev's view and approach to the talks would be more flexible than that expressed by General Chervov and Admiral Amel'ko.

Admiral Amel'ko then responded that he and General Chervov were "not trying to forecast the outcome of the summit," although the Soviet negotiators at Geneva shared the views both officers expressed. Under his breath, General Chervov disagreed with Admiral Amel'ko saying they were not trying to forecast the summit outcome.

At one point during the discussion, Senator Pell pursued Senator Byrd's and Senator Nunn's point by asking Chervov why U.S. SDI research should be denied, yet continuation of Soviet SDI research is permissible. General Chervov responded with the usual Soviet line that the Soviets were not developing a space strike system and had no plans, unlike the U.S., to develop a nationwide ABM system. Whether for propaganda or signalling purposes, the general then added that maybe the situation(goal?), of the Soviet SDI program will be completely different in the future.

The General then repeated the usual Soviet charge that the U.S. was developing space strike weapons and first strike weapons. He listed as first strike U.S. weapons the B-1B bomber, the Advanced Technology Bomber, cruise missiles, the Midgetman ICBM and the Pershing II missile system.

At another point, Senator Warner again asked Admiral Amel'ko how research activities could be verified. The Admiral said that national (technical) means of control (verification) can monitor the pace of development, except for fundamental research.

On another arms control issue, Senators Nunn and Warner told the Soviet officers that some agreement had been reached between the two Senators and the Administration on the former's nuclear "Risk Reduction Centers" proposal. The Senators asked to meet with the Admiral before they left Moscow to discuss their proposal with him and to share with him the Administration's latest thinking about it. The Admiral ~~did not respond~~ *said that the Soviet Government knew about the proposal and needed to better understand it.*